

Pyrenees Shire Council
TOURISM STRATEGY 2016-2019

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Acknowledgement

Pyrenees Shire Council would like to acknowledge the time and expertise of the tourism operators and community groups who participated in the development of this Tourism Strategy. Their valuable contribution assisted with the selection of strategies to progress the tourism industry in the shire.

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1. Executive Summary

Tourism is a valuable industry sector to the Pyrenees Shire, contributing local employment, recreational opportunities, and additional services and facilities that enhance the shire's liveability for residents. Tourism contributes \$28 million to the shire's economy and 128 jobs,¹ and it indirectly supports other industry sectors such as construction, wine and food production, and retail.

The shire has an appealing range of visitor experiences focused on wine, natural assets, and goldfields heritage including the historic features of its small towns and villages. It also has a strong events calendar, attracting over 40,000 visitors a year.

To guide Council's activities to support the growth of the tourism industry to increase visitation, expenditure and length of stay in the shire, a four-year strategy has been commissioned. It builds on the achievements of the previous tourism plan (2012-2014) and updates our directions in line with changes in the market place to ensure we focus on activities that create the most impact.

The preparation of the strategy engaged tourism operators, business and community groups to contribute their knowledge about the workings of the sector, including new developments underway or proposed.

Roles

Council's roles in support of tourism have been reviewed and confirmed as:

- Development of economic assets, including attracting investment in tourism facilities and services
- Land use planning to support tourism investment
- Developing local amenity including recreational facilities and streetscape improvements
- Advocacy on issues affecting the shire's tourism industry
- Grants and funding
- Developing partnerships and relationships to facilitate co-operative marketing and development
- Capability development to support the professionalism of the tourism industry
- Promotions to attract visitors
- Communications to encourage networking and sharing of information within the industry
- Visitor information servicing
- Events support
- Research to understand visitor markets and best practice development strategies in the tourism sector
- Emergency management to ensure visitors are well-informed and safe while travelling in the Pyrenees Shire.

¹ Remplan, August 2015

Overview of Pyrenees Tourism Activity

A review of tourism activity in the shire has identified that:

- Domestic tourism visitation in the Grampians region and Ballarat sub-region has experienced healthy growth over the last five years, providing the Pyrenees with opportunities to leverage visitation from surrounding areas where there is a target market and product match, and alignment with visitors' travel patterns.
- The shire's tourism industry is demonstrating strong growth in employment, while other traditional sectors, such as agriculture, are declining. This supports the value of continued investment in the sector.
- According to a shire-based business survey, a significant proportion of tourism businesses appear to be struggling (over a third with very low turnover), which reinforces the imperative for these businesses and Council to be proactive in attracting visitors, encouraging longer length of stay, and upgrading operators' business skills.
- The shire's tourism businesses need to increase and improve their online marketing presence, including the development of more mobile device-friendly websites and social media activity, to encourage greater visitation and spend. Council also needs to increase the level of online content that promotes the shire's tourism assets.
- Broader factors that support the future growth of tourism visitation to the Pyrenees Shire include an increase in Ballarat's population, a rise in Chinese visitation with increased travel in regional Victoria, and a lower Australian dollar.

Product Strengths

Visitors primarily make travel decisions based on the appeal of destinations and their various experiences. This reinforces the need to take a destination-focused approach to tourism development in the shire. Tourism businesses and activities are currently primarily focused on north and south shire clusters, i.e. Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds, and Beaufort and surrounds. Their products vary considerably, and enhancing the experiences in each destination requires a tailored approach.

| Destination | Product Strengths | Emerging Product Strengths | Competitive Positioning (based on existing strengths) | Opportunities to enhance Competitive Positioning |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds | Wineries Racing and wine events Historic towns Refreshment stop | Dining Local produce Arts and gardens Heritage Nature – bush walking, mountain biking, four-wheel driving, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premium wine products • Proximity to Melbourne (2 hours) and Ballarat (1 hour) • Timely refreshment stop along the Sunraysia Highway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness of Pyrenees wine brand • Main street improvements • Interpret history • Develop arts and culture • Improve signage and trails at nature reserves |
| Beaufort and surrounds | Refreshment stop (cafes) Nature – bushwalking, mountain biking | Collectables Homesteads Visual arts Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely refreshment stop along the Western Highway (2 hours' drive from Melbourne) • Convenient hub for touring the Pyrenees, Grampians, Ballarat and goldfields towns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve directional signage to / at nature reserves • Main street improvements • Enhance business proactivity and collaboration • Interpret history |

Strategic Directions

The Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2016-2019 aims to increase visitation and yield (expenditure) by visitors year-round throughout the shire.

| DIRECTION | RATIONALE |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1. Brand Refresh the Pyrenees brand and strengthen consumer awareness.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve cohesion amongst wineries and broader tourism industry in messaging about the Pyrenees region. • Address a perceived decline in awareness about the Pyrenees wine region in recent years. |
| <p>2. Product development Improve visitor experiences in key destinations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop visitor experiences to enhance competitiveness, including events. • Build upon undeveloped assets. • Facilitate private sector investment in tourism opportunities. |
| <p>3. Promotions and visitor information Increase visitation and length of stay through market-driven promotional activities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase digital presence and respond to specific market trends in researching and purchasing travel. • Utilise high impact advertising mechanisms that provide compelling industry buy-in opportunities. • Provide high quality, personalised visitor information that reflects the shire's products strengths and visitors' specific requirements, and which supports the management of emergency events (when relevant). |
| <p>4. Industry and community collaboration Enhance collaboration between tourism operators and community in key destinations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tourism operators and the community to collaborate and embrace new opportunities to improve the tourism experiences in their town / area. • Increase the communication of product updates amongst the shire's tourism operators. |
| <p>5. Industry skill and knowledge Support the tourism industry to keep abreast of market trends and business best practice.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskill tourism operators in cultural awareness and business opportunities related to the Chinese market. • Operators need to improve their digital marketing skills. |
| <p>6. Partnerships Partner with a regional tourism board to leverage co-operative opportunities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form an alliance with a regional tourism board to access a range of promotional, product and industry development opportunities. |

2. Refreshing Council's Tourism Directions

2.1 Introduction

Tourism has been identified by Pyrenees Shire Council as a key platform for economic development in the shire.² It is worth \$28 million to the local economy, providing 128 local jobs³. It also indirectly supports other sectors such as retail, construction and food production.

Tourism helps to diversify our economy from a traditionally agricultural base, generating new employment and 'importing' revenue into the shire. It also stimulates population growth and business relocation to the shire by showcasing its many assets when people visit the area as visitors.

Tourism can also enhance the quality of life of local residents by stimulating investment in infrastructure, services and activities that could not be sustained by our local population alone. It also brings people from around Australia and the world into our communities providing opportunities for social interaction and cultural exchange that can enrich our lives.

Visitors are attracted to the Pyrenees Shire for many reasons – most notably to visit its many award-winning, internationally-renowned wineries, or to attend one of its major events such as the Steam Rally at Lake Goldsmith, the Rainbow Serpent Festival or the Avoca Races. Visitors also tour through the shire to enjoy our goldfields heritage and 19th century architecture, and to explore the area's towns and villages. Visitors are also increasingly drawn to the natural assets of Mt Cole State Park, Mt Buangor State Park and the Pyrenees Ranges for bushwalking, mountain biking, 4WD'ing and other outdoor activities.

To continue to support and develop the shire's tourism industry, Pyrenees Shire Council has prepared a four-year tourism strategy. It builds on the achievements of the previous tourism plan (2012-2014), which was focused on improving visitor products and experiences, strengthening promotion of the Pyrenees wine region and other tourism assets, improving the professionalism and resilience of the tourism industry, and strengthening relationships with tourism stakeholders.

The new strategy will involve an update of Council's current tourism directions to ensure they address new opportunities and challenges in the sector, and reflect changes in market trends.

It is intended that the Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2016-2019 (hereon referred to as the "Tourism Strategy") will be implemented in conjunction with local tourism businesses, regional tourism organisations, relevant community groups, government agencies, and other stakeholders.

² Pyrenees Shire Growth Strategy 2015-2019

³ Remplan data, August 2015

2.2 Pyrenees Shire Geographic Area

Pyrenees Shire is located in Victoria’s western region, approximately two hours’ drive from Melbourne and 30 minutes from Ballarat. The shire includes the townships of Beaufort, Avoca, Landsborough, Moonambel, Raglan, Redbank, Warrenmang and many other communities. It has a residential population of nearly 7,000 people, with the primary industries being agriculture and wine production. The main centres of tourism activity are Beaufort and surrounds, and Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds (*see circled areas on map below*). However, tourism-related events are also held at other locations in the shire, such as Lexton.

Image: map of the Pyrenees Shire, Victoria, Australia



2.3 Economic Development and Tourism in Pyrenees Shire

The Pyrenees Shire Growth Strategy 2015-2019 states that all councils have a role in economic development, which includes tourism - a role which is embedded in the Local Government Act and which is a key element of the Pyrenees Shire Council's Council Plan.

The Victorian Local Government Act notes the importance of economic-related outcomes in the decision making and activities of any council. In particular, the Local Government Act specifies that:

*The primary objective of a Council is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions. In seeking to achieve its primary objective, a Council must have regard to the following facilitating objective:
"To promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district."*

Economic-related outcomes are espoused in the Pyrenees Shire Council's Council Plan which has "Commerce" as a key objective that is expressed as follows:

"We will develop the local economy and increase the population of the Pyrenees Shire."

The Pyrenees Shire Growth Strategy supports the Council's ability to achieve the objectives in the Council Plan, in particular the "commerce" objective. The strategy aims to foster sustainable and achievable economic growth in the shire's economy and to support an increase in the shire's population.

The Growth Strategy outlines three objectives to achieve this economic outcome:

1. Attract new residents, visitors and investment.
2. Foster the capability of key economic sectors.
3. Develop local business and employee capability.

The development of the Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2016-2019 is a key initiative to guide the achievement of Objective 1.



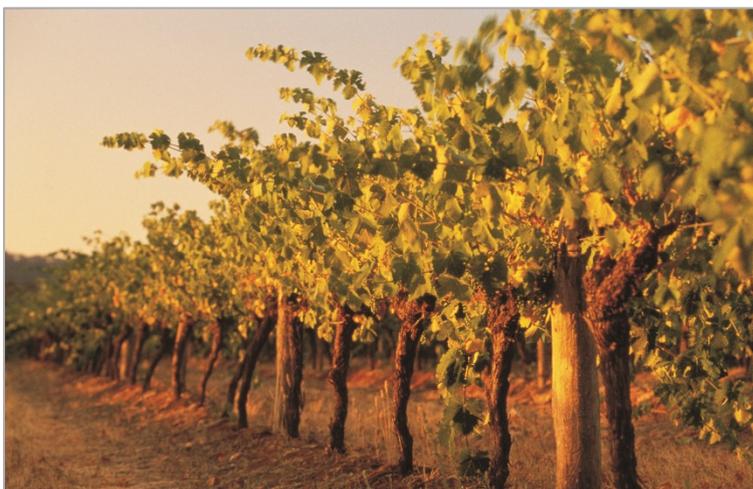
3. Developing the Strategy

Pyrenees Shire Council commissioned Insight Communications to assist with the preparation of the Tourism Strategy, which encompassed the following tasks:

1. Review of the Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2012-2014;
2. Review of state, regional and shire-wide tourism strategies and plans, and identification of key objectives and actions of relevance;
3. Analysis of the most recent Victorian, regional and shire-based tourism research, including a Shire Tourism Business Survey;
4. Consultation with approximately 40 tourism stakeholders including local tourism businesses, Grampians Tourism, Ballarat Regional Tourism, community-managed tourism attractions, local business and community groups, and other identified stakeholders;
5. Preparation of a Discussion Paper for two industry and community workshops;
6. Workshops with Councillors and staff of Council's Economic Development Unit;
7. Development and refinement of the Tourism Strategy incorporating industry and community feedback;
8. Identification of measures to assess Council's service delivery to tourism operators;
9. Identification of relevant inclusions for principles, policies and business processes that will assist Council to implement the Tourism Strategy.

Local businesses and residents have had the following opportunities to provide input into the preparation of the Tourism Strategy:

- Interviews with local tourism operators and business groups (limited number to assist with preliminary investigations)
- Tourism business survey
- Industry and community workshops
- Written feedback on the draft Tourism Strategy.



4. Council's Involvement in Tourism

4.1 Roles

Following are the types of roles which Council can undertake to assist with the growth of the tourism sector:

- **Development of Economic Assets** – Council can directly invest in and/or attract investment in a number of assets that have a significant impact on the tourism economy.
- **Land Use Planning** – Council can play a key role in the land use planning required to ensure there are areas of appropriately zoned land to support tourism activity
- **Developing Local Amenity** – Council can directly invest, attract and/or influence investment into the development of assets and infrastructure that support the tourism industry.
- **Advocacy** – Council can advocate to other levels of government and service agencies with respect to the needs of tourism operators.
- **Grants and Funding** – Council can apply for a range of grants for a variety of purposes that assist the tourism sector.
- **Partnerships and Relationships** – Council can invest in and/or work with a range of local and regionally based organisations and entities to foster the capability of the tourism industry.
- **Capability Development** – Council can promote and/or engage the services of providers who provide tourism business-related training, and communicate industry information and research to tourism operators.
- **Promotion** – Council can actively promote tourism activities in the Pyrenees Shire and seek to attract support for and/or investment in tourism business opportunities.
- **Communications** – Council can keep the tourism industry informed of new developments, market trends and professional opportunities.
- **Visitor information servicing** – Council can provide face-to-face customer service and utilise other communication channels to assist visitors with travel information.
- **Events support** – Council can provide advice, promotional opportunities, and support to attract and host tourism-related events.
- **Research** – Council can undertake research into best-practice management approaches and monitor business activity.
- **Emergency management** – Council can provide accurate and timely information to tourism operators to help them keep visitors informed about emergency events, and to put their own preparation and recovery plans in place.
- **Direct employment** – Council can employ staff in tourism-related roles.

4.2 Key Activities

Council's current scope of tourism-related activities includes (amongst other things):

- Development, management and maintenance of visitor information services in Avoca and Beaufort;
- Development and maintenance of caravan parks at Beaufort, Avoca and Landsborough.
- Development and maintenance of other infrastructure that supports tourism activity, including streetscape improvements, toilet blocks, picnic facilities, etc.
- Support of local events through sponsorship and assistance with legal requirements, planning and promotions.
- Support for some community-managed attractions through the provision of planning tools for management and promotions.
- Communications to tourism operators.
- Research and development of experiences for relevant niche markets.
- Advice to potential investors and assistance to locate suitable sites.
- Funding and production of visitor information such as www.visitpyrenees.com.au, a visitor guide and other brochures.
- Social media activities through visitavoca and visitbeaufort sites.
- Active financial membership of a regional tourism board to implement regional and local tourism activities.
- Seasonal marketing campaigns in association with tourism operators.



5. Tourism Activity in Pyrenees Shire

5.1 Tourism Visitation in the Wider Region

Visitation data for the Pyrenees Shire is unavailable; however, the shire is located between the busy tourism hubs of the Grampians National Park (Dunkeld and Halls Gap) and Ballarat. The level of tourism activity in each region has a bearing on tourism activity in the shire, and provides opportunities for future marketing collaboration.

| <i>Average per annum over last 5 years to June 2015</i> | Domestic overnight visitors % growth p.a. | Domestic visitor nights % growth p.a. | International overnight visitors % growth p.a. |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Regional Victorian average | 4.5% | 3.4% | 5.4% |
| Grampians region | 6.6% | 6.9% | 4.0% |
| Ballarat | 4.7% | 11.6% | -1.0% |

Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), National and International Visitor Surveys, 2010-2015, year ending June 2015

The table above shows that the Grampians region outperformed the regional Victorian average over the last five years for growth in domestic visitor nights and visitor numbers. Ballarat also significantly outperformed the regional Victorian average for growth in domestic visitor nights (the most useful indicator of industry growth as it more closely reflects expenditure / tourism activity in the region). The Grampians region recorded a lower growth rate for international overnight visitors than the regional Victorian average, and Ballarat experienced a small decline. (Data for international visitor nights is unavailable due to a lack of statistical validity.)

NB. It should be noted that the Pyrenees Shire has been part of the Grampians tourism region for the last eight years. However, as the region covers five shires, its trends are not necessarily reflective of activity in all parts of the region. Industry consultation undertaken for the Tourism Strategy indicated that visitation, particularly to wineries in the shire's north, has generally slowed in recent years.

In conclusion, tourism activity in both regions is experiencing healthy growth, and is performing significantly better than the regional Victorian average for domestic markets. (NB. Domestic markets are the vast majority of visitors). This provides opportunities for the Pyrenees Shire to leverage visitation from its surrounding attractions.

5.2 Tourism Sector Economic Analysis

The latest Remplan data estimates the value of tourism in the Pyrenees Shire at approximately \$28 million per annum.⁴ Tourism provides 128 jobs (7.7% of all jobs in the Pyrenees Shire) and generates \$5.54 million in wages and salaries.

| Sector | 2006 | 2011 | change | % change |
|--------------------------------|------|------|--------|----------|
| Construction | 81 | 118 | 37 | 45.7% |
| Public Administration & Safety | 130 | 150 | 20 | 15.4% |
| Other Services* | 29 | 45 | 16 | 55.2% |
| Accommodation & Food Services | 96 | 106 | 10 | 10.4% |
| Wine Production | 180 | 163 | -17 | -9.4% |
| Education and Training | 133 | 108 | -25 | -18.8% |
| Agriculture, | 619 | 542 | -77 | -12.4% |

*Note Other Services includes a broad range of personal services; religious, civic, professional and other interest group services; selected repair and maintenance activities; and private households employing staff

⁴ Analysis of 2013/14 data from Australian Bureau of Statistics' Tourism Satellite Account by Compelling Economics, August 2015.

Tourism is the third largest private sector employer and third highest employment growth sector in the shire, represented in 'Other Services' and 'Accommodation and Food Services' in the table above.⁵ Employment in education and training, agriculture and wine production are all declining.

Tourism has the second lowest wages of the shire's key industry sectors, at an average of \$40,800 per annum. This may be due, in part, to a high representation of semi-retired people in the industry. However, it may also indicate that there is inadequate tourism activity to fund higher wages.

5.3 Tourism Business Survey

In September 2015, a survey was distributed to tourism businesses in the shire to gain insights into their operation and to identify key challenges impacting on the sector. A survey link was sent to 87 businesses through Council's business database. Twenty-seven businesses responded, a response rate of 31%, which indicates the results have a reasonable level of statistical validity.

The shire's major tourism sectors were well represented amongst respondents, with 48% providing accommodation (including many wineries), 44% operating a café or restaurant, and 36% operating a winery. All respondents were located at either Avoca, Beaufort, Moonambel, Redbank or Raglan.

Some of the major findings included:

- 76% of tourism businesses have a website but only 44% of them are mobile-friendly – this is of concern given that mobile digital devices are taking over as the primary tool for online holiday research.
- 84% have a Facebook page; however, only 56% are using social media, a critical and low cost tool for tourism promotion.
- 36% of respondents' businesses have an annual turnover of less than \$50,000, which may be due to a significant proportion of operators being semi-retired - or it may indicate that the businesses are struggling.
- There was a net overall increase in turnover for respondents' businesses in the last financial year (with some operators experiencing a decline). Thirty-five percent of respondents indicated their turnover remained unchanged.
- 50% of respondents did not upgrade or renovate their business in the last five years. A lack of reinvestment in businesses can lead to a reduction in visitation and financial viability. Those who did reinvest spent an estimated average of \$183,600 during the period.
- The key challenges to increase business turnover identified by respondents included:
 - Need for more visitors to the shire
 - Staff availability (during peak visitation periods of week / year) and quality
 - Cost of marketing
 - Flooded domestic and international wine markets – stiffer competition
 - Need for more business collaboration
- Key areas of assistance sought from Pyrenees Shire Council included:
 - Promotion of the district and its tourism businesses, including continued development of the Pyrenees website.
 - Opportunities for professional development of tourism operators
 - Ongoing support of established events
 - More proactivity from Council.

⁵ Pyrenees Shire Council Growth Strategy 2015-2019

5.4 Visitor Information Servicing

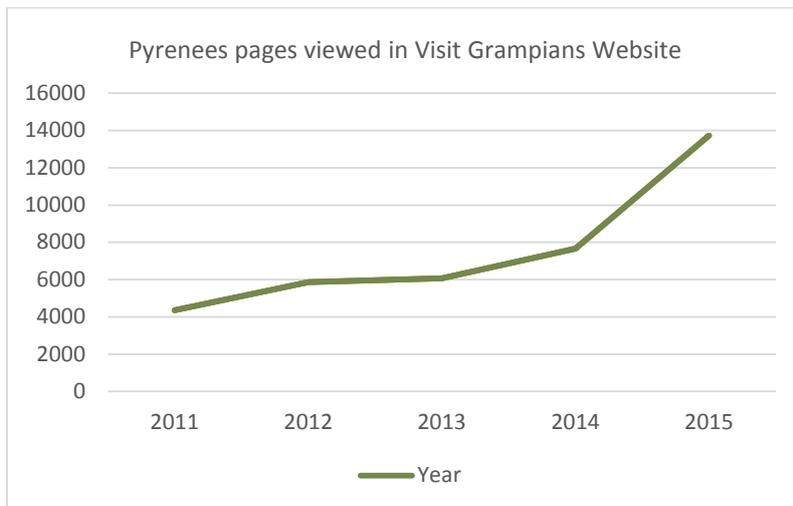
The number of walk-in visitors to **Avoca Visitor Information Centre (VIC)**⁶ recorded an average growth rate of 2.3% per annum over the last five years, receiving over 6,000 visitors in 2014-15.

Beaufort VIC recorded an average decline of 7% per annum over the last five years, attracting just over 5,200 visitors in 2014-15.

The low rates of growth / decline are consistent with visitation to VICs around Victoria as a result of increased usage of websites, apps and other digital technologies to attain travel information prior to visiting a destination and while in-region. This includes the grey nomad market who increasingly consult smart phones and tablets while travelling to attain visitor information.

Council developed the website **www.visitpyrenees.com.au** in 2013. In the 12 months to June 2015, the website attracted almost 15,500 visitors and 51,000 page views. A similar result was attained for the year prior. This means an extra 15,500 people were provided with visitor information each year for the last two years in addition to VIC walk-ins, totalling around 26,700 visitors per annum for the shire.

The Pyrenees-related pages on the Visit Grampians website (when it was operated through the Visit Victoria website) received steady growth in page views over the last five years, to nearly 14,000 per annum in 2015 (year ending August). This indicates that an increasing number of visitors were interested in Pyrenees content throughout the period, and reflects the market growth in sourcing travel information online.



Source: Tourism Victoria, Visit Victoria website, years 2011-2015, ending August

⁶ The VIC numbers are specific to visitor walk-ins and exclude local residents' use of other services, such as library facilities.

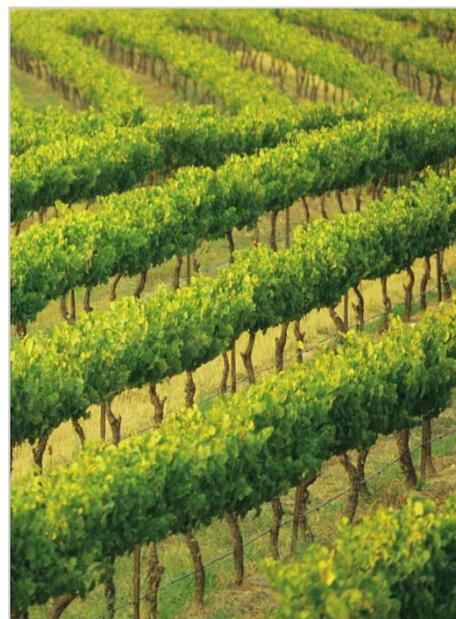
5.5 Environmental and Market Factors

In understanding current and potential future market trends in the Pyrenees Shire, following are some broader factors that are affecting tourism activity in Australia and regional Victoria:

- A decrease in the Australian dollar is encouraging more domestic travel, which is likely to continue for the next few years. It also encourages more international visitation.
- The recent rise in Chinese visitation to Australia and Victoria, and the exceptionally strong growth forecast for the next decade, is likely to see much greater visitation to regional Victoria, including a rise in independent travel and longer length of stay.
- Ballarat's residential population is expected to increase from 100,000 to 200,000 by 2050, providing a major market opportunity for Pyrenees tourism businesses.

5.6 In Conclusion

- Domestic tourism growth is very healthy in the Grampians region and Ballarat sub-region, providing the Pyrenees with opportunities to leverage visitation from surrounding areas where there is a target market and product match, and alignment with visitors' travel patterns.
- The tourism industry in Pyrenees Shire is a strong employment growth sector, while other traditional sectors, such as agriculture, are declining. This supports the value of continued investment in the sector.
- A significant proportion of businesses appear to be struggling (over a third with very low turnover), which reinforces the imperative for these businesses and Council to be proactive in attracting visitors, encouraging longer length of stay, and boosting the professional skills of businesses.
- Pyrenees Shire tourism businesses need to improve their online marketing presence, including mobile device-friendly websites and social media, to improve visitation and spend. Council also needs to increasingly invest in online content promoting the tourism assets of Pyrenees Shire.
- Broader factors that support the future growth of tourism visitation to the Pyrenees Shire include an increase in Ballarat's population, a rise in Chinese visitation, and a lower Australian dollar.



6. Product Strengths and Opportunities

6.1 Pyrenees Wine Region

The Pyrenees Shire is undoubtedly best known as a wine tourism destination, with the Pyrenees recognised as an official wine region of Australia. There are over 20 cellar doors in the region, which is well-regarded for its Shiraz, and increasingly for Cabernet Sauvignon and a variety of whites. At least eight wineries have been awarded five stars by renowned wine critic, James Halliday, as listed in the Wine Atlas of Australia.

Wine events are a very successful part of the shire's events calendar, including the Avoca River Food and Wine Festival and Moonambel's Longest Lunch. A series of new smaller events such as Ten2One and special events staged by local wineries offer more intimate, in-depth wine tourism experiences. All of the wine events help to encourage repeat and new visitation to the Pyrenees and to promote the wine region brand.

The Grampians Grape Escape, while held in Halls Gap, is well attended by Pyrenees winemakers and helps to spread the word about the quality of Pyrenees wines, and to connect the Grampians and Pyrenees wines in the minds of consumers.

While wine tourism activity is growing strongly in Victoria which provides a market opportunity (see below), there is increasing competition from other Victorian wine regions, some of whom have larger cellar door businesses and destination restaurants than the Pyrenees, with greater brand recognition.

Wine Tourism Market Trends

Wine tourism activity across Australia and Victoria has experienced strong growth rates in recent years, with Australia recording an 8.5% per annum increase in domestic overnight wine tourism visitation between 2010 and 2014.* Victoria attained even higher growth of 9.7% per annum during the same period, indicating that the state is increasingly perceived as a wine tourism destination. Victoria received 788,000 domestic overnight wine visitors in the 12 months to June 2014. A wine tourist is defined as someone who visited a winery while on their trip.

** Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Surveys, 2010-2014, year ending June; research compiled by Tourism Victoria*

NB. Data relating to wine tourism activity is not available for the Grampians region or Pyrenees Shire.

6.2 Food Tourism

There is clearly a strong affiliation between visitors' interest in wine tourism and quality food experiences. Food tourism encompasses products and services that feature locally prepared and/or produced foods such as farm gates, providores, hospitality outlets and opportunities to learn about food and cooking.

Several new food businesses have been established in the shire during the last few years, with others on the drawing board. In Avoca, a couple of new hospitality businesses have opened their doors, and the Avoca Hotel has continued to build its reputation and attain accolades from the industry. However, in recent times, there has been an overall reduction in food services provided by cellar doors in the district, which can be problematic on weekends. Options for evening meals in Avoca are also very limited on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Beaufort is slowly strengthening its positioning as a vintage-retro town with eclectic gift shops, antique stores and op shops. In the last few years, a couple of similarly themed hospitality outlets have sprung up, including Deliciously Vintage and Sparrows Café in the heritage Beaufort Motors building, which was recently extended to provide wood-fired pizzas. However, much more can be done to build awareness of, and collaboration between, food and retail businesses to support Beaufort's reputation for vintage (yet contemporary) experiences.

A greater diversity in venue options for evening meals will also support an emerging overnight visitor market which is staying at unique accommodation venues in and around Beaufort.

The shire in general has significant potential for more local food producers and quality hospitality outlets that cater for target markets.

6.3 Events

Events attract over 40,000 visitors to the shire per annum and generate significant economic benefits for community groups and businesses, as well as provide recreational opportunities for residents. Examples of major events and approximate attendances include:

- Rainbow Serpent Festival – 15,000 pa;
- Lake Goldsmith Steam Rallies – tally of 2 events totalling 10,000 pa;
- Avoca Races – tally of 2 events totalling 8,000 pa.

Events rely on a substantial level of volunteerism from local communities, and often local businesses (large and small) provide significant financial backing. It is a segment of tourism that is relevant across the shire as even in locations where there is not a lot of tourism product, events can provide appealing visitor experiences. Council's continued support of events is crucial for local communities.

6.4 Cultural Tourism – arts, heritage, culture

Opportunities for visitors to experience arts, culture and heritage in the Pyrenees Shire have been very limited in recent years. However, the shire has some significant cultural assets that have the potential to be further developed. These include:

- Visual arts
- Goldfields heritage
- Gardens
- 19th century homesteads and pastoral heritage
- Agricultural farm experiences

With the exception of several enduring events such as the Rotary Pyrenees Art Exhibition and Sale and Moonambel Art Exhibition, in the past there have been few opportunities for visitors to access **visual arts** in the shire, and for local artists to display their works. Visitors interested in wine, heritage and nature (the shire's strengths) generally have a strong interest in artistic experiences and further development would add greater depth to the shire's product offer.

The recent restoration of the Beaufort Railway Station and conversion of a section into the Art Trax Gallery is an immense achievement of the Pyrenees Arts Council, with the assistance of VicTrack and the Pyrenees Shire Council. The operation of the gallery will continue to draw on the volunteers of the Arts Council, as well as local artists.

The presence of the Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Association in another former railway building also provides the promise of a more permanent display /museum for people who visit Beaufort outside of Steam Rally event days.

Another outstanding effort is also underway at the Avoca Railway Station precinct through the work of Avoca Community Arts and Gardens Inc. While concept planning and negotiations are still under development, the proposal for a community gallery, arts trail, nursery focusing on heritage and indigenous plants, **gardens** and flora tours is highly commendable, and will potentially provide an appealing cultural precinct at the northern end of the shire.

The newly established Avoca Chinese Gardens, which is managed by community volunteers, also provides a beautifully designed cultural precinct that is open to the public.

An emerging strength lies in the shire's **historic homesteads** with the recent openings of Eurambeen Homestead near Beaufort for accommodation, garden tours and events, and Mount Mitchell Homestead near Lexton for events, farm experiences and accommodation within the estate. The National Trust-managed, Mooramong Homestead, near Skipton is also available for events and tours with several accommodation options on the property.

The **goldfields heritage** of Pyrenees Shire is evident throughout the shire, from the mullock heaps and disused mines to the architecture of early miners' cottages and public houses. However, there are few avenues to access stories about the period – its events, characters, important sites and early European settlement. With much of the research already available, there are many opportunities to interpret these stories to add depth and richness to the visitor experience of the Pyrenees region. There are also very few opportunities for visitors to find out about the area's Indigenous peoples, which is of growing interest to domestic and international markets.

Farm tourism is popular amongst some international visitors, especially from various Asian nations, and city-based Australian students who have not had opportunities to learn about rural agricultural life. While there is only a low level of farm tourism activity occurring within the shire, there are opportunities for farmers who wish to diversify their business to provide farm tours, hands-on experiences and accommodation to a variety of visitor markets.

Cultural tourism activity is growing strongly in Victoria which provides a market opportunity for the Pyrenees Shire (see below).

Cultural Tourism Market Trends

Cultural tourism is growing in appeal with Australia and Victoria recording growth in domestic overnight cultural visitors of 7.2% per annum and 7.6% per annum respectively between 2010 and 2014.* Victoria received 3.2 million domestic overnight cultural visitors in the year ending June 2014. A cultural tourist is defined as someone who attended a theatre performance, concert or other performing arts, a cultural festival or event, or who visited a museum, gallery, artist's studio or heritage site while on their trip.

** Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Surveys, 2010-2014, year ending June; research compiled by Tourism Victoria*

6.5 Nature-based Tourism

The shire's nature-based assets have been increasingly promoted over the last few years. They include Mt Cole State Forest, with its beautiful walking trails such as Paradise Walk, and Mt Buangor State Park which includes the two-day Beeripmo Walk (also crosses into Mt Cole State Forest). The Pyrenees State Forest also contains a variety of trails and campsites for walking, mountain bike riding, four-wheel driving and trail bike riding. Lake Beaufort is also generally one of the shire's leading nature-based attractions; however, it is currently experiencing very low water levels due to a lack of rainfall.

While usage numbers for the shire's nature reserves are not available from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), some anecdotal information is available. Raglan tourism operator, Cave Hill Creek, indicates that visitation to Mt Cole State Forest is increasing, with patronage of forest trails by their visitors alone amounting to 5,900 people a year for bush walking, bike riding and abseiling, amongst other things.

Promotion of nature-based tourism by Council has increased in recent years with publications such as the Pyrenees Region Caravan and Camping Guide, Pyrenees Region Visitor Guide, flyers including 'Take A Walk – Beaufort and Surrounds', and the increase in walking and cycling information on www.visitpyrenees.com.au.

There is still further work to do on the development of mountain bike trails in the Pyrenees State Forest for which there is growing demand.

It is important to ensure that the different types of trail usage, i.e. walking and cycling versus motorised recreational activities, are appropriately planned for, signed and promoted to avoid incompatible use of the same location. Directional signage to the shire's natural attractions is also much in need of improvement.

With a significant area of state forest in the shire, it attracts people who want to go camping, bushwalking or four wheel driving with their dogs. This appears to be a growing niche market.

Nature-based tourism activity has recorded strong growth in Victoria which provides a market opportunity for the Pyrenees Shire (see below).

Nature-based Tourism Market Trends

Nature-based tourism in Australia and Victoria is becoming increasingly popular with domestic overnight visitor growth of 6.2% and 9.4% per annum respectively between 2010 and 2014.* Victoria recorded 3.7 million nature-based overnight visitors in the 12 months to June 2014. Nature-based visitors are defined as those who visited a national or state park, a zoo, public gardens, went bushwalking, whale / dolphin watching, or diving / snorkelling.

** Source: Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Surveys, 2010-2014, year ending June; research compiled by Tourism Victoria*

7. Market Positioning

Product offerings vary considerably across the shire, with the north characterised by wineries, events and historic towns (Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds), and the south characterised by nature-based and historical attractions (Beaufort and surrounds). Different highways transect the shire taking travellers through the north or south but without linking both areas. As a result, the north and south regions tend to attract different types of visitor markets seeking different experiences, with few people travelling through the whole shire on the one trip.

When determining the best ways to develop and promote the shire's tourism industry, it is important to consider these product and market variations. As research shows that visitors are attracted to destinations, it is useful to tailor strategies to the strengths of the two areas rather than treat them as the same. The table below identifies the market positioning for Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds, and Beaufort and surrounds to inform Council's strategy development process.

| Destination | Product Strengths | Emerging Product Strengths | Competitive Positioning (based on existing strengths) | Target Markets | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | Lifestage | Visitor Origin |
| Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds | Wineries Racing and wine events Historic towns Refreshment stop | Dining Local produce Arts and gardens Heritage Nature | Premium wine products focussed on Shiraz and Cabernet, only 2 hours from Melbourne, 1 hour from Ballarat Timely refreshment stop along the Sunraysia Hwy (2 hours' drive from Melb) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Event participants – racing and wine ◦ Grey nomads – self-drive touring seniors ◦ Mid-yield couples, families and groups on day trips or short breaks ◦ Couples on short-break experiences | <p><i>Primary</i></p> <p>Melbourne, Ballarat residents, visitors staying in Ballarat (inc. VFR)</p> <p><i>Secondary</i></p> <p>Other regional Victoria (especially Bendigo, Geelong)</p> |
| Beaufort and surrounds | Refreshment stop Nature – bushwalking, mountain biking | Homesteads Visual arts Heritage | Timely refreshment stop along the Western Highway (2 hours' drive from Melbourne); Beautiful natural assets only 30 mins from Ballarat; Convenient hub for touring the Pyrenees, Grampians, Ballarat and goldfields towns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Grey nomads – self-drive touring seniors ◦ Seniors day trippers from Melbourne and Ballarat, esp. V/line travellers ◦ Families ◦ <i>Secondary market</i> - couples seeking premium heritage / food / wine product (international and domestic) | <p><i>Primary</i></p> <p>Melbourne, Ballarat residents, visitors staying in Ballarat (inc. VFR)</p> <p><i>Secondary</i></p> <p>Other regional Victoria (especially Bendigo, Geelong)</p> |

8. Strategic Directions

Objectives

The Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2016-2019 aims to increase visitation and yield (expenditure) by visitors year-round throughout the shire.

Strategic Considerations

For the term of this strategy, Pyrenees Shire Council will be operating within a very restricted budgetary environment given the Victorian Government's commitment to rate-capping, and other reductions in Federal and State Government funding. This poses challenges to maintain the level of servicing that Council has contributed to tourism in the past, which included the appointment of a Business Development Officer for two years (jointly funded by Council and State Government), who assisted with the implementation of Council's previous tourism strategy.

As a consequence, this Tourism Strategy will need to more stringently prioritise projects to ensure that resources are focused on actions that create the greatest impact, respond to urgent need, and are affordable and achievable.

Strategy Options for Tourism Development

There are some potential options to guide Council's overarching directions for the development of tourism in the shire:

a. With its limited budget, Council can decide to focus on the development and delivery of a small number of visitor experiences to ensure they are delivered to a high standard, and to boost awareness of these experiences in the marketplace, eg. Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds– wine tourism and various supports for wine visitors; Beaufort and surrounds – refreshment destination and nature-based tourism.

Or

b. It can undertake a broad range of activities across the spectrum of tourism experiences and the geographic area of the shire, with less impact but some small achievements.

Or

c. It can decide on a staged approach - do a few things really well for 2-3 years (Stage 1), before branching out into another area of focus for Stage 2 (4+ years).

Or

d. It can make available a larger budget to provide a greater stimulus to the tourism sector to generate additional visitation and employment.

For this Tourism Strategy, Option (a) is recommended as it focuses resources on areas of greatest need and impact. To attract more visitors, it is imperative that the two primary destinations - Avoca, Moonambel and surrounds, and Beaufort and surrounds - further develop their competitive points of difference in terms of products and experiences.

Direction 1: Brand

A significant amount of work was undertaken in 2012 to develop a brand for Pyrenees Shire that would create consistency in the way the shire is promoted by the tourism industry and strengthen awareness of the Pyrenees region. However, while Council has adopted the brand and developed a style guide that we use for promotional materials, tourism operators (including wineries), community groups who manage visitor attractions and business groups are not necessarily aware of, or using, the brand. The brand should also be adapted to create sub-brands for the destinations of Beaufort and Surrounds, and Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds.

Refresh the Pyrenees brand and strengthen consumer awareness.

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Promote use of the "Pyrenees Unearthed" brand materials amongst the tourism industry. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the brand to ensure take-up by the shire's wineries and the Pyrenees Grapegrowers and Winemakers Association (PGW). Implement a communications strategy for the tourism industry to increase understanding of the brand and its application. | PSC PGW Business groups Tourism operators | PSC | 2017-18 |
| 2. Create sub-brands for the destinations of Beaufort and Surrounds, and Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with tourism operators, relevant community and business groups to develop for each destination. Educate participants about the value and application of the sub-brands for promotional and product development initiatives through the development process. Prepare a style guide and promote take-up of the sub-brands by tourism operators. | PSC Community / business groups Tourism operators | PSC | 2018-19 |
| 3. Raise awareness of the Pyrenees Wine Region brand amongst target markets. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support PGW to implement the Pyrenees Wine Tourism and Marketing Plan to increase awareness of the Pyrenees brand in key markets. | PGW PSC Wineries | PGW Wineries PSC | Ongoing |

Direction 2: Product Development

Enhancing the competitiveness of the shire's visitor experiences in comparison to other destinations is crucial to encourage visitation and longer length of stay in an increasingly sophisticated tourism industry.

While there are some high quality experiences in the shire provided by tourism operators, and natural assets with strong visitor appeal, much of the shire's tourism potential is relatively undeveloped. Building on the product strengths, including emerging, identified in Section 6, informed by the market positioning in Section 7, will transform the shire's product offer.

Beaufort, in particular, currently lacks standout competitive features to attract visitors other than its convenience as a refreshment stop to the Grampians and destinations along the way to Adelaide. As a result, visitor length of stay and expenditure is often very short. The impending highway by-pass will exacerbate Beaufort's challenges to attract visitors unless the product offer is considerably strengthened and it becomes a destination in its own right.

Enhance visitor experiences in key destinations.

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds | | | |
| 4. Support the development and promotion of the wine sector, including events. | | | |
| Events continue to be a critical stimulant of visitation to Avoca and Moonambel, and they raise awareness of the wine brand. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support collaborative projects with PGW such as Avoca River Wine Festival, Ten2One and others. | PGW PSC Selected community groups | PSC | Ongoing |
| Continue to work with PGW to attract funding support to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and market their events Implement the Pyrenees Wine Tourism and Marketing Plan. | PGW PSC Vic Govt | Vic Govt | Ongoing |
| 5. Investigate and, if appropriate, support the implementation of the Pyrenees Grampians Wine Touring Route (include quality food outlets); | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a wine trail that links visitors from Melbourne, Ballarat and the Grampians to Pyrenees and Grampians wineries. | PGW Grampians winemakers PSC RTB | PGW Grampians winemakers PSC RTB Individual wineries | 2016-17 |

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 6. Develop a business and community engagement project to improve the main street experience and design of Avoca. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the brand 'personality' of Destination Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds (see Action 2). Identify a Vision and relevant themes to convey in the 'experience' of the main street. Prepare a design framework for key elements that will give life to the Vision and key themes, giving consideration to town entry signage, gardens, building facades, street furniture, shade in the median strip, architecture, car parking, outdoor arts, and interpretation of the town's history and characters. | PSC Community Tourism operators PGW | PSC State Govt | 2019-20 |
| 7. Provide support and advice to Avoca Community Arts and Gardens Inc. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist ACAG to redevelop the Avoca Railway Precinct to become an arts and culture, gardens and nursery attraction, including an arts trail. | PSC ACAG | PSC Victrack State Govt | 2016-17 |
| 8. Provide support and advice to the community to manage, maintain and promote the recently established Avoca Chinese Gardens. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the community group as required. | ACG PSC | PSC | Ongoing |
| 9. Enhance historic interpretation at Moonambel and surrounds. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the local community and tourism operators to identify the heritage stories of Moonambel and surrounds and devise interpretive information at appropriate sites. | PSC Community Tourism operators | PSC State Govt | 2018-19 |
| 10. Continue to investigate the establishment of mountain bike trails in the Pyrenees State Forest. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DELWP to devise mountain bike trails that connect to key towns and wineries. | PSC DELWP Wineries Tourism operators | DELWP PSC | 2016-17 and ongoing |
| 11. Modify public infrastructure and facilities to support cycling activity in Avoca and Moonambel. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Including frequent road grading, road signing of bike lanes, bike racks, etc. <i>Cycling maps – see Action 33</i> | PSC Tourism operators Community | PSC | 2016-17 and ongoing |

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Beaufort and Surrounds | | | |
| 12. Improve the appearance of the main street to make Beaufort a more appealing place to visit. | | | |
| a. Enhance and restore its heritage features including verandahs, repainting building facades; working with private business owners to improve eyesores. | PSC Community / business groups Residents | PSC State Govt Businesses | 2017-18 |
| b. Investigate the development of a main street heritage improvement program which supports private businesses to upgrade their shop fronts. | Tourism operators | | 2017-18 |
| c. Create additional points of interest in the main street and parks, such as sculptures, art creations, heritage interpretative signs, etc. | | | 2018-19 |
| d. Undertake landscaping works to increase the level of vegetation in the main street to increase shade and improve the visual aesthetics of the precinct. | | | 2018-19 |
| 13. Strengthen the retail offerings in Beaufort's CBD. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage investment attraction in the retail precinct, including provision of investment incentives | PSC B4B Business community | PSC | 2018-19 |
| 14. Support the development of a new event that reflects the sub-brand of Destination Beaufort and Surrounds. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use events to build Beaufort's profile and reputation. | Business / community groups PSC | PSC State Govt | 2018-19 |
| 15. Facilitate Beaufort to become an RV-friendly town. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial a free campsite. Install a dump point. Install parking signage in the CBD for RVs and caravans. | PSC Community / businesses | PSC | 2016-17 |
| 16. Continue to support the community-managed Trax Gallery as required. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide operational and management advice as required. Support with promotions as feasible. | Pyrenees Arts Council PSC | PSC | Ongoing |

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 17. Support local residents and community groups to improve the visitor experience at Camp Hill. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visitor amenities and other features to complement the scenic lookout and attract more visitors. • Improve directional signage from Beaufort CBD to Camp Hill. | Pyrenees Arts Council Community groups PSC | PSC Community groups | 2019-20 |
| 18. Interpret the heritage of Beaufort and Surrounds for visitors. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a working group to develop interpretive materials. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify key heritage stories and sites of interest to visitors and residents, such as Beaufort township, Mt Cole. b. Identify suitable traditional and innovative ways of conveying these stories, eg. on placemats in cafes, imprints in pavements (eg. using old script), podcasts. c. Heritage trail maps in the shire's visitor guide to be more motivational and tell the stories about the sites. Upload trail maps online. | PSC Historical society Pyrenees Arts Council B4B Tourism operators | State Govt PSC | 2018-19 |
| Whole of Shire | | | |
| 19. Undertake a signage audit of nature-based attractions in the shire to identify existing signage and gaps. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DELWP to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve signage at Beaufort CBD directing visitors to Raglan, Mount Buangor State Park and Mount Cole State Forest, including Beeripmo Walk. ○ Improve signage to Mt Buangor State Park and Mt Cole State Forest, including Beeripmo Walk, along all major travel routes. ○ Improve signage from Avoca to trails in the Pyrenees State Forest. ○ Install park entry signage (arrival). ○ Install signage at parking areas indicating visitor facilities, trails and their conditions, permissible activities, and nature and heritage interpretive information. | PSC DELWP Tourism operators Community / business groups | DELWP PSC | 2017-18 |

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 20. Support the development of tourism-related events across the shire. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide sponsorship, and development and regulation advice to events. | PSC Event organisers | PSC Event organisers | Ongoing |
| 21. Improve internet services across the shire. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support tourism operators to promote and sell their products and services online, and to facilitate visitors' in-region use of mobile digital devices. <p>As travellers become increasingly reliant on digital technology for travel information, bookings and social media postings while on their journey, poor internet services will become a serious impediment to business growth. Business operators are also ham-strung in their efforts to use digital platforms such as online reservation systems if services are inadequate.</p> | PSC Telstra / NBN Co. Others as required | Telstra NBN Co. PSC | Ongoing |
| 22. Encourage the development of accommodation in scenic nature-based locations. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify appropriate sites on private land in nature-based locations for private sector accommodation developments Amend zoning to facilitate development. | PSC Private developers Landowners | PSC | 2019-20 |
| 23. Encourage the development of farm stays in the shire. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise and support private sector operators who seek assistance to develop farm stay experiences. | Farmers Investors PSC | PSC | 2019-20 |
| 24. Continue to upgrade Council's caravan parks. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the master plans for caravan parks at Beaufort, Avoca and Landsborough. | PSC Committees of Management | PSC State Govt | Ongoing |
| 25. Support the promotion of free camping options at suitable locations. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage people seeking free camping opportunities to camp at appropriate locations in the shire. | PSC Management agencies / groups | PSC | 2016-17 |

Direction 3: Promotions and Visitor Information***Increase visitation and length of stay through market-driven promotional activities.***

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Whole of Shire | | | |
| 26. Continue to provide visitor information through services in Avoca and Beaufort. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to operate visitor information centres in Avoca and Beaufort. Provide outreach visitor information services at selected events. Conduct regular reviews of service quality and efficiency. | PSC | PSC | Ongoing |
| 27. Upgrade the shire's tourism website. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve its user-friendly capabilities. Increase the level of detailed content in line with the product strengths identified in this strategy. Reflect the regional and sub-brands in design, imagery and content. | PSC Tourism operators | PSC Tourism operators | 2016-17 |
| 28. Continue to produce a shire-wide visitor guide. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the role, size and cost of the visitor guide. If feasible, continue to produce, focusing on the destination areas of Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds, and Beaufort and Surrounds. Reflect the regional brand and sub-brands. | PSC Tourism operators | PSC Tourism operators | Ongoing |
| 29. Develop seasonal marketing campaigns with the regional tourism board. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include television advertising and digital resources as key promotional mediums for autumn and spring campaigns. Seek industry buy-in. | PSC RTB Tourism operators | PSC RTB Tourism operators | Ongoing |
| 30. Enhance social media activity. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the regional tourism board and tourism operators to contract a professional to drive social media activity for the shire's tourism product. | PSC RTB Tourism operators | PSC RTB Tourism operators | As required |

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 31. Increase the level of detailed information about nature-based tourism experiences. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare printed and online materials about the shire's nature-based trails for bushwalkers, cyclists, and trail bike users. Include detailed information about trail sites, facilities, level of difficulty. | PSC DELWP Tourism operators | PSC DELWP | 2018-19 |
| 32. Prepare tear-off maps for each tourism-focused town. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These maps should include all essential services, businesses, and features of interest to help operators to direct visitors to local attractions and services. | PSC Community groups Tourism operators | Participating tourism operators (maps to be self-funding) PSC | 2019-20 |
| 33. Continue to provide information to visitors during emergency events. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VICs to inform walk-in visitors, and organise email updates to tourism operators about openings and closing of facilities, eg. parks, roads, reserves, weather warnings, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train VIC staff Identify and convey key messages | PSC Tourism operators | PSC | Ongoing |
| Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds | | | |
| 34. Produce cycling trail maps for Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve consultation with tourism operators and the community to determine appropriate routes, including off-road trails (where possible) and back roads. | PSC Tourism operators Community | PSC | 2016-17 |

Direction 4: Industry and Community Collaboration

The capacity and desire for the local tourism industry to work together to enhance visitor experiences in their destination, and to market co-operatively to share costs, expertise and access to markets, is essential to be competitive in the marketplace.

Collaboration will be particularly important in Beaufort with the impending highway by-pass to improve the resilience and sustainability of the business community. However, a spirit of openness to new ideas and change is also important to attract and maintain new businesses and new community members.

It is important to increase understanding of the value of tourism in communities, and to encourage businesses to be proactive in improving the financial viability of their own business, as well as the prosperity of the whole town.

Enhance collaboration between tourism operators and community in key destinations.

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Beaufort and Surrounds | | | |
| 35. Develop a tourism business and community engagement project that builds the capacity and motivation to collaborate to support the vitality and prosperity of the destination. | | | |
| <p>The project is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase understanding of the value of tourism. • Identify a vision for Destination Beaufort and key initiatives to accomplish the Vision. • Provide skill development in attracting and developing experiences for visitors. • Guide the group to implement actions. • 'Weather proof' the experience, i.e. ensure visitation to the town is not dependent upon a single attraction or industry sector. • Implement a comprehensive program of communication with other local residents and businesses about the project. • The project should be hands-on, involve direct learning and experience of successful small town destinations, engage residents as well as business owners, inspire and motivate participants, encourage participants to think in lateral and creative ways, encourage participants to work and think collaboratively, and to problem-solve giving consideration to co-operative solutions. | PSC Community and business groups Local residents | State Govt PSC | 2019-20 |
| Avoca, Moonambel and Surrounds | | | |
| <i>See also Direction 2 in relation to community and industry collaboration to create main street improvements.</i> | | | |
| Whole of Shire | | | |
| 36. Improve communications between tourism operators across the shire. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VICs to co-ordinate the production of a weekly communications piece to provide operators with updates on opening hours, new products, etc. via a weekly e-bulletin or social media. | PSC Tourism operators | PSC | 2019-20 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an annual tourism industry forum to encourage networking and communication between operators across the shire. | PSC Tourism operators | PSC Tourism operators | Ongoing |

Direction 5: Industry Skills and Knowledge

The tourism sector is a rapidly changing industry that must keep abreast of market and technological developments or it risks losing market share and profitability.

Support the tourism industry to keep abreast of market trends and business best practice.

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Whole of Shire | | | |
| 37. Support the shire's tourism industry to become China-ready. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage tourism operators to participate in Chinese cultural awareness training offered by the regional tourism board. Ensure the Pyrenees product information is included in multi-lingual publications and digital tools produced by the regional tourism board for the Chinese market. Encourage promotion of wine tour day trips and overnight stays ex-Ballarat and Melbourne. | RTB PSC Tourism operators | RTB PSC Tourism operators | 2016-17 |
| | | | 2017-18 |
| | | | Ongoing |
| 38. Increase operators' take-up of digital technology to promote and sell their products and services. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the regional tourism board to encourage operators to develop mobile-friendly websites. Conduct social media workshops. | RTB PSC Tourism operators | RTB PSC Tourism operators | Ongoing |

Direction 6: Partnerships

Pyrenees Shire Council should continue to work with a regional tourism organisation to ensure the shire is represented in effective marketing activities, and leverages industry and product development initiatives.

Partner with a regional tourism board to leverage co-operative opportunities.

| Action | Partners | Potential Funding Sources | Priority Year |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 39. Continue to work with a regional tourism board to access promotional, industry and product development opportunities. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the selected regional tourism board. | PSC RTB | PSC | Ongoing |

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

In order to ensure that the implementation of the Tourism Strategy is occurring effectively and is producing positive results, Council is to conduct the following monitoring and evaluation activities. Annual results should be used as benchmarks against subsequent years (as appropriate).

Industry performance

- a. Annual analysis of Remplan data assessing tourism industry employment and wages.

Visitation to the shire

- b. Annual analysis of visits to www.visitpyrenees.com.au and to the Pyrenees content on the regional tourism board's website
- c. Annual analysis of visitors to Avoca and Beaufort Visitor Information Centres, including monthly (seasonal) monitoring.
- d. Major events to provide annual visitation figures.

Promotions

- e. Measurements of specific marketing campaigns as appropriate.
- f. Reach of Council-initiated social media postings.
- g. Monitor number of visits to upgraded themed pages on www.visitpyrenees.com.au, eg. walking, cycling, events, etc.

Industry and community collaboration and skill development

- h. Evaluation measurements for engagement projects to be determined as part of the development of project methodologies.
- i. Number of operators who open the weekly industry communications piece (if digital).
- j. Number of operators who attend industry workshops and forums.

Council will prepare an annual action plan for staff to guide the implementation of the Tourism Strategy.

Appendix 1: Consultation Participants

Members of the tourism industry, community organisations and local residents (total 42) who were involved in consultations for the strategy included:

| ORGANISATION | KEY CONTACT | ROLE |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Tourism Operators | | |
| 1. Antiques and Collectables Store, Beaufort | Chris West | Owner |
| 2. Avoca Motel | Susan Lyten | Owner |
| 3. Avoca Shire Turf Club | Kate Kirkpatrick | Manager |
| 4. Beaufort Caravan Park | Hank Owen | Caretaker |
| 5. Beaufort Market | Jenny Gordon | |
| 6. Blue Pyrenees Estate | Andrew Koerner Tess Astbury | General Manager Cellar Door Manager |
| 7. Cave Hill Creek | Angela Chandler | Owner |
| 8. Dalwhinnie Winery | David Jones | Owner |
| 9. Dog Rock Winery | Allen Hart | Owner |
| 10. Eurambeen Homestead | Sarah Beaumont | Owner |
| 11. Golden Nugget Tours | Andrew Grant | Owner |
| 12. Hedon Farm | Elizabeth Teal | Owner |
| 13. Imperial Egg Gallery and Beaufort Motel | Peter Saunders | Owner |
| 14. Mount Avoca Winery | Matthew Barry | Owner |
| 15. Olive and Lavender Store, Avoca | Trish Godfrey | Owner |
| 16. Rosetta's Retreat, Trawalla | Grazia Dennerstein | Owner |
| 17. Sally's Paddock | Sasha Fair | Daughter of owners |
| 18. Siltforce | Trevor Davey | Owner |
| 19. Summerfield Wines | Mark Summerfield | Owner and wine maker |
| 20. Taltarni Winery | Robert Heywood | Wine Maker |
| 21. Tapas Bar Avoca | Duane McDonald | |
| 22. Trax Gallery | Jenny Hill | Volunteer |
| 23. The Avoca Hotel | Ian Urquhart | Owner |
| 24. Warrenmang Vineyard and Resort | Athalie Bazzani | Owner |
| Community / Business Organisations | | |
| 25. Avoca Business and Tourism | Margaret Pilgrim | Secretary |
| 26. Avoca Chinese Garden Association | Jane Howe | President |
| 27. Avoca Community Arts and Garden Inc. | Hugh Forster Margaret Pilgrim Irene Harmsworth Maggie Armstrong Brian Armstrong | President |
| 28. Ballarat Regional Tourism | George Sossi | CEO |
| 29. Business for Beaufort | Craig Wilson Deb Titherington | President |
| 30. Grampians Tourism | Will Flamsteed | CEO |
| 31. Grampians Tourism | David Osborn | Chair |

| ORGANISATION | KEY CONTACT | ROLE |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 32. Pyrenees Arts Council | Heather Featherston Anne Beer Barbara Blamey | President Committee members |
| 33. Pyrenees Grapegrowers and Winemakers | Andrew Koerner and committee members | President |
| 34. Tourism Victoria | Nicole McLean | Product development |
| Community Members | | |
| 35. Farm | Lorilee von Schoenberg | Owner |